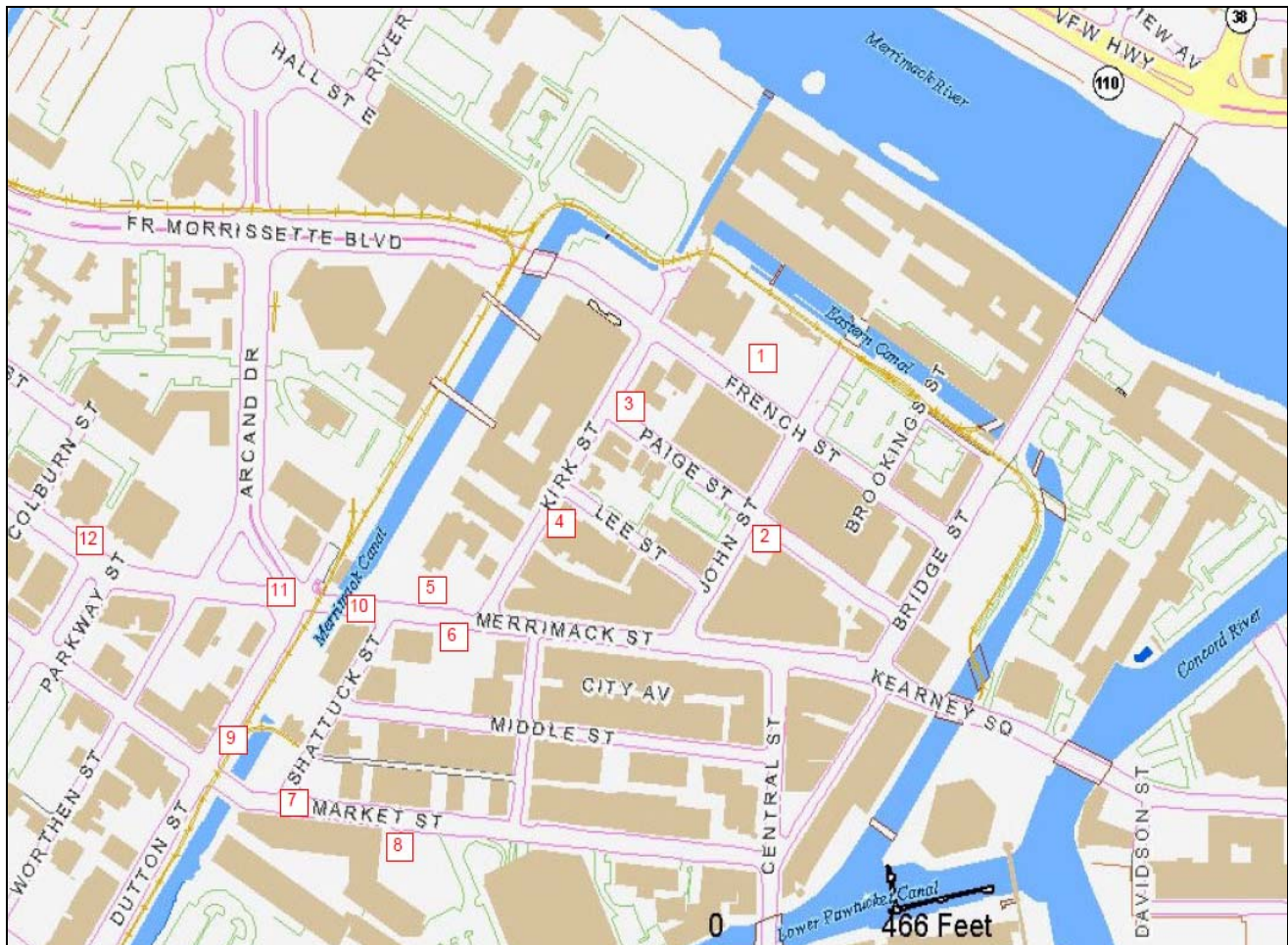


**Walking Tour of Downtown Lowell:
A Dozen Sites Associated with
Anti-slavery in the Spindle City, 1830 – 1860**

Gray Fitzsimons, May 2011

(Special Thanks to Martha Mayo, Director, Center for Lowell History,
University of Massachusetts Lowell)



Map of Downtown Lowell from City of Lowell, Geographic Information System

#1: Boott Cotton Mills Boardinghouses



Image from Lowell Historical Society

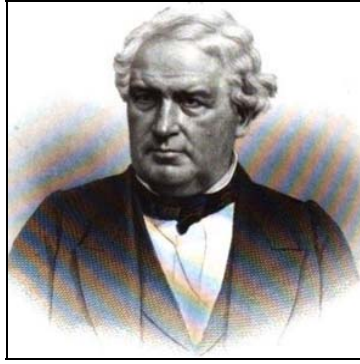


Image from Microsoft / Pictometry International Corp

Many of these boardinghouses were originally constructed in the mid-1830s along with the Boott Cotton Mills, named for Kirk Boott, an important figure in the founding of Lowell and the initial agent of the Merrimack Manufacturing Company. The estate of Kirk Boott, which featured an impressive mansion, designed in the Greek-Revival style, and a landscaped lawn and garden, was located here. In 1835 Boott had his house moved to the head of Merrimack Street to make way for the construction of the mills. (Beginning in 1839, two years after Kirk Boott's death, this house served as the Lowell Corporation Hospital, under the aegis of the city's large textile interests. In 1930 the Archdiocese of Boston acquired the property, whereupon Saint Joseph's Hospital was established.) Although never the city's largest textile mill, the Boott employed nearly 900 women and 160 men by the mid 1840s. Many resided in the corporation's boardinghouses. Men and women lived in these brick-constructed, 3-1/2 story, corporate-owned dwellings, which, by the mid 19th century were fronted by tree-lined, unpaved lanes gently sloping down to the Eastern Canal and the Boott Mills.

Women made up the majority of boardinghouse residents, just as they constituted the overwhelming majority of the city's cotton mill workers. As we know, women in antebellum America did not have the vote, but they participated in the nation's political life and in social reform through the formation of such organizations as the Lowell Female Labor Reform Association and the Lowell Female Anti-Slavery Society.

Although membership in each of these organizations was never large, hundreds of women signed petitions demanding such reforms as the 10-hour day and the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia (1835-39), and protesting the annexation of Texas (1845). One Lowell petition demanding the abolition of slavery in Washington, D.C., had 1,634 names and measured 27 feet in length (*Liberator*, March 14, 1835).



Linus Child, c.1870

Linus Child, a longtime agent of the Boott (1845-1862) permitted anti-slavery petitions to circulate through the mills (as did a number of other agents); however, he and other high-ranking mill officials prohibited the circulation of 10-hour day petitions.

#2: John Street Congregational Church

(formerly on SW corner John and Paige streets)

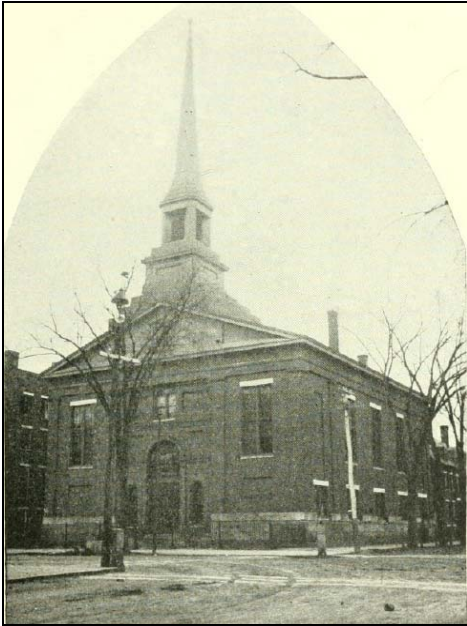


Image from *Lowell: A City of Spindles* (1900)



Image from Microsoft / Pictometry International Corp.

Known by some Lowell residents as the “Anti-Slavery Church,” the John Street Congregational Church was erected in 1839-40. Despite its name, the church’s first pastor, Reverend Stedman Hanks (1811-1889), although associated with the anti-slavery movement, strongly opposed Garrisonian-abolitionism. In fact, Stedman’s perspective was widely shared among clergy in Lowell and other New England cities and towns for Garrison had relatively few supporters in the region or elsewhere in the United States. Garrison’s limited following was overlooked by many slave-holding Southerners and anti-abolitionist Northerners who chose instead to stress the threat Garrisonian abolitionists posed to the union.

Eden B. Foster (1813-1882), the second pastor, although not allied with Garrison, emerged in the 1850s as one of the city’s leading anti-slavery clergymen. It was during Foster’s early tenure that

the John Street Church solidified its reputation as the “Anti-Slavery Church.” Foster’s sermons “The Rights of the Pulpit” and “The Perils of Freedom,” delivered in the summer of 1854, shortly after the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, called upon religious leaders to exercise their “right” and obligation to preach against the extension of slavery in the territories and on behalf of civil liberties for all.



Reverend Eden B. Foster, c.1875

Foster continued to call for the abolition of slavery in the territories, though he sought conciliation with Southern brethren, fearing civil war. In 1861, suffering from fatigue and ill-health, Foster resigned as pastor. He returned in 1868, however, and led the church for several years. Foster finally retired in 1878.

Attendance at the John Street Church steeply declined in the 1890s and it closed in 1902. Soon after the building was demolished and by 1905 a large brick building housing the Young Women’s Christian Association was erected. The YWCA was subsequently razed for the parking lot that currently occupies the site of the church.

#3: Kirk Street Agent’s House



Image Courtesy of John Goodwin



Image from Microsoft / Pictometry International Corp

Designed in a Greek-revival style by Lowell builder and architect James H. Rand and completed in 1846, this 2-1/2 brick building was originally a two-family house serving as a residence for the agents of the Boott Cotton Mills and the Massachusetts Cotton Mills. Linus Child (1802-1870) was the first Boott Mills agent to live here.

A Yale graduate and lawyer who had established a practice in Southbridge, Massachusetts, Child was chosen agent in 1845. Upon arriving in Lowell he assumed an active role in the city's Whig party having won election to the Massachusetts Senate six times while living in Southbridge. He won election as a Lowell alderman in 1846 and as councilman four years later.

Before moving to the Spindle City, Child had acquired a reputation for supporting anti-slavery causes, having been an outspoken foe of Texas annexation. In Lowell, Child helped lead a campaign to free the Reverend Charles T. Torrey who had been imprisoned in Baltimore in 1844 for helping escaped slaves to freedom. Torrey's death in 1846 galvanized many young Whigs to adopt an even stronger anti-slavery position. Child, however, tended to steer a middle course.

Many "conscience Whigs" became disenchanted with Child and their party in 1848 when Child and other conservative party members, who were branded cotton Whigs, supported the nomination of slave-holding Zachary Taylor for president. Though under increasing attack from



William S. Robinson, c.1870

local Free-Soilers such as William S. Robinson (1818-1876) and anti-slavery clergymen such as Charles Adams (Methodist Episcopal minister) and William H. Brewster (Wesleyan Methodist minister), Child remained a moderate Whig and helped raise funds to pay the Virginia owner of escaped slave Nathaniel Booth, who had settled in Lowell and opened a barber shop (see below), for Booth's freedom.

Although he supported Lincoln in 1860, Child broke ranks and opposed the Emancipation Proclamation in 1862, the year in which he resigned as agent of the Boott Mills, moved to Boston, and resumed legal work, much of which was in service to New England's textile interests. Child's departure had little effect on politics in Lowell as a majority of city voters continued to support Republican candidates and Abraham Lincoln in national elections.

Lincoln had visited Lowell as a Whig congressman from Illinois in 1848 and spoke at a Whig rally held at City Hall. Child served as chair of the evening rally at which Lincoln, after delivering a well-argued speech on Whig principles animated by colorful stories and humorous asides aimed at Free Soilers and Democrats, had to be reminded to say a few words on behalf of presidential candidate Zachary Taylor. Though some believe that Lincoln stayed overnight at the agent's house as a guest of Linus Child, it is likely that he boarded with Congregationalist minister Stedman Hanks, who may have been related to Lincoln's mother, Nancy Hanks.

The impressive brick two-family house continued to serve as the agent's residence for the Boott Mills until 1901, when the Boott and the Massachusetts Mills sold the property to Boston-based real estate developer Saiman Sirk. (William Southworth, agent of the Massachusetts Mills, continued to live here with his family until 1906.) For a few years the grand residence served as a boardinghouse. The City of Lowell acquired the property in 1914 and used part of the house as an annex to the high school until 1931. A section of the house served as a health clinic as late as the 1970s. In 1979, the year after Lowell National Historical Park was established the city donated the building to the National Park Service. It currently serves as the park headquarters.

#4: Lowell High School



Image Lowell: *A City of Spindles* (1900)



Image from Microsoft / Pictometry International Corp

The Town of Lowell established a co-educational public high school in 1831 and it was located in a building owned by the Hamilton Mills on Middlesex Street. As one of the early students recalled, “Our schoolroom was small, dingy, and crowded ... but [Thomas Clark, the high school's sole teacher, was] about the best teacher nature or art could produce.”

Conditions may have improved somewhat when the high school soon moved to a grammar school building on South and Highland streets, occupying the upper floor. By the mid 1830s, however, the Hamilton Mills building served again as the high school, marking the third or fourth move of the high school within a span of a half dozen years.

As the town's population grew and Lowell was incorporated as a city in 1836, the School Committee looked to improve and expand the high school. Around 1840 the city constructed a red-brick building between Kirk and Ann Street, along the Merrimack Canal near the center of the growing downtown, to serve as the high school. The high school was not only coeducational, but also admitted students of African descent.

During the legal contest over Boston's segregated schools in the 1840s, Lowell Mayor Elisha Huntington wrote, “public schools of Lowell of every grade—primary, grammar, and high—are open to colored children, on the same conditions as to white children... The colored child, as the white, attends the school that happens to be located in his neighborhood, and no fault is found or questions asked.” Lowell's African-American population, however, was quite small (in 1860, out of a total of nearly 37,000 residence, 41 were recorded as colored; and of these only 3 were listed in the federal census as being between the age of 10 and 14).

Caroline Van Vronker was among Lowell's children of color who attended the high school in the antebellum years. One prominent Lowell educator, Joshua Merrill, recalled soon after Van

Vronker's death in 1885, that after her high school education Van Vronker obtained a teacher's certificate, but was unable to find a teaching job in Lowell due to "objections on account of her color." Thus Lowell's antebellum color line was experienced apparently not by its young students, but by residents of color, upon reaching adulthood.

Although various accounts of racial prejudice in Lowell into the late-19th century may be found, as well as the establishment of separate African-American fraternal and educational organizations in the Spindle City, including the Colored Debating Club and the Colored Butler Club—both formed in 1882—there are a number of examples of black adults who labored in the mills or served in a civic capacity on an equal footing with whites. For example, in 1868, Horace B. Proctor, who maintained a barber shop and bath house for many years on Central and Market streets, was Lowell's first African American to be placed on a jury list. And in the 1890s William and Peter Lewis worked at various times in one of the city's cotton mills in the highly skilled position of mule spinner.



This portrait of Barzillai Lew (1743-1822), who was born in Groton, Massachusetts, and served with the English army in the French and Indian War, then with the Americans against the British in Revolutionary War, is part of art collection of the U.S. Department of State in Washington, DC. The portrait is attributed to the famous portraitist Gilbert Stuart.

After the Revolution, Lew purchased a farm in a section of Dracut, Massachusetts, which was subsequently incorporated into the city of Lowell. One of Lew's grandsons, James Adrastus Lew (c1821-1886), acquired land and built a house which stands today on Mount Hope Street. Lew's wife, Elizabeth (1821-1917), reported that they aided escaped slaves on their way to Canada.

A number of Lew's descendents, including great-great granddaughters Theresa and Marion Lew, and great-great grandson Gerard, graduated Lowell High School in the early 1900s. In fact, Theresa Garland Lew was Class Salutatorian in 1912 and taught many years at the nearby Bartlett School.

Lowell High School continued to graduate a number of the city's African-American male and female, as well as Irish Catholic students. Most of the young men and women receiving diplomas, however, were of white, Protestant New England stock. Into the 1880s, admission to the high school was based on a rigorous examination, covering English, mathematics and geometry, history, and the classics, administered to grammar school students.

As the city became more ethnically diverse in the late-19th and early 20th century, and with changes in high-school admission policy, increasing numbers of students of Irish, French Canadian, Swedish, Polish, and Greek parentage attended or graduated Lowell High School.

Although the 1840 building was later enlarged, by the 1880s it was woefully undersized for a city with a school population as large as Lowell's. Demolished in the early 1890s, this old red-brick structure was replaced with a larger four-story building, containing Romanesque elements and buff-brick walls. Designed by Lowell architect Frederick W. Stickney (1854-1918), who was a graduate of Lowell High School, the new high school opened in December, 1893.

Subsequent additions extending north along Kirk Street and the Merrimack Canal were undertaken in the 1920s and up to the present time. However, the 1893 building may still be seen in the southernmost section of the high school.

#5: St. Anne's Episcopal Church



Image from *Picturesque Lowell* (1896)

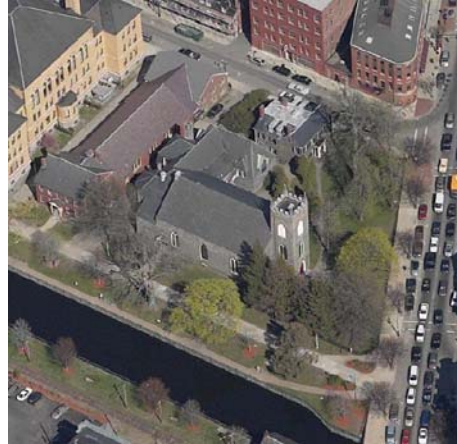


Image from Microsoft / Pictometry International Corp

In February, 1824, the Merrimack Religious Society was organized in East Chelmsford (prior to the establishment of the Town of Lowell) and received authorization from the directors of the Merrimack Company, headed by Kirk Boott, to construct a church located along the Merrimack Canal and fronting Merrimack Street. Completed in 1825, St. Anne's, with its distinctive granite, rubble stone construction and Gothic Style, was consecrated as an Episcopal church, in deference to the Episcopalian Boott family.

The first minister, Reverend Theodore Edson (1793-1883), quickly emerged as an important figure in Lowell's spiritual and civic life. Edson was a guiding force in the establishment of Lowell's early public schools and ultimately clashed with Boott over public school funding, as well as the separation of St. Anne's Church from the Merrimack Company.

Eventually, in 1842, the Congregation of St. Anne's Episcopal Church purchased the church property from the Merrimack Company, though Lowell's largest textile concern continued to own the stone-constructed parsonage. (For a number of years, beginning about 1843, Edson had to move out of the parsonage, and the two-story gable-roof building served as the agent's house of the Merrimack Corporation. In the 1850s, one agent, sought to have St. Anne's church bells removed—he did not succeed! Eventually the parish acquired the rectory and Edson returned to live in home he had vacated nearly 25 years earlier.)

Of the many local accounts about the life of Reverend Edson, often overlooked is his involvement in the city's anti-slavery movement and the Lowell Anti-Slavery Society, formed in early 1834. By the late 1830s Edson was serving as president of this society and was aiding escaped slaves, including one John Taylor, from Kentucky, who had fled his master in Ohio and eventually found his way to Boston. In Boston, Taylor met William Lloyd Garrison. Concern over his possible capture, Taylor was assisted by Garrison who sent him to Edson via Salem and Andover. Thus the stone parsonage appears to have been one stop along the growing underground railroad.

#6: Old City Hall

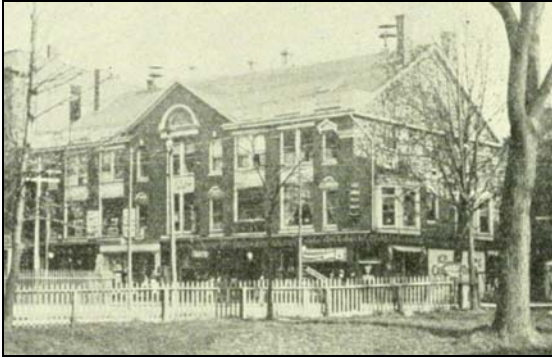


Image from *Lowell: A City of Spindles* (1900)



Image Courtesy of Lowell National Historical Park

Since its construction in 1830, Lowell's Town Hall, which became City Hall in 1836, has been the scene of countless political and social activities, many of which were tied to important national and local figures, including Henry Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, William Lloyd Garrison, George Thompson, Frederick Douglass, and Abraham Lincoln. Much of this action occurred in the chambers on the second floor, where a public hall and rooms for Lowell's municipal government were in constant use until the present City Hall was completed in 1892.

One early event here, which, for many decades, evoked the most controversy, occurred in December 1834, during British abolitionist George Thompson's second visit to Lowell. Invited by the Lowell Anti-Slavery Society to speak in Lowell, Thompson had been touring New England towns and cities with William Lloyd Garrison to promote the abolitionist cause. Many of Lowell's leading citizens, however, as in other towns, feared that anti-slavery advocates such as Thompson and Garrison were preaching a radical view that would lead to disunion and possibly civil war. They responded with threats and then violence.

"Fellow Citizens," one handbill proclaimed, "Shall Lowell be the first place to suffer an Englishman to disturb the peace and harmony of our country?" The anti-Thompson agitation quickly inflamed the passions of men in Lowell. At Thompson's second lecture in the town hall, a small, but raucous group gathered outside the building where they hissed and shouted at the speaker. Moments later, someone hurled a projectile through a window, narrowly missing Thompson's head. Undeterred by the violence, Thompson concluded his talk. The next evening a larger crowd of antagonists formed outside the hall, threatened violence, and prevented Thompson from speaking. The abolitionist meeting quickly broke up as the Southwicks and the Twinings escorted Thompson out of the building. The hostile reception given to Thompson in Lowell would be repeated in other New England towns during his anti-slavery tour.

Today the Old City Hall serves as commercial and office space. Although somewhat altered over the years, the building retains much of its late-19th century exterior appearance and its first floor, which contained commercial businesses from its inception in 1830, continues to function in this fashion.

#7: Second Universalist Church

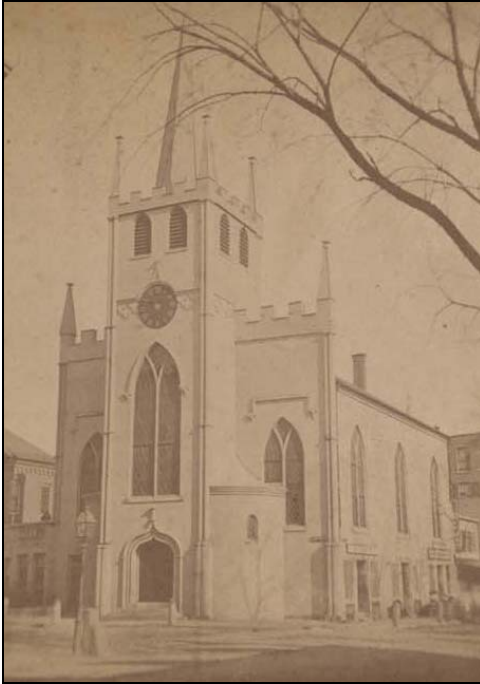


Image from Lowell Historical Society



Image from Microsoft / Pictometry International Corp

The Second Universalist Church was organized in 1836 and the following year a Gothic-style church was erected on the corner of Shattuck and Lowell (Market) streets. From 1839 to 1842 Abel Thomas (1807-1880) served as minister. He gained acclaim while in Lowell in the publication the “Lowell Tracts,” a defense of the Universalist theology, which he wrote with the renowned Unitarian Universalist theologian Thomas B. Thayer. At the same time, Reverend Thomas organized female improvement circles, formed primarily of mill girls, and promoted the publication of mill girl writings. The improvement circles were held in Second Universalist Church and in another Lowell church.

The women in these circles produced essays, poems, and works of fiction that Thomas published and led to establishment of the well-known periodical the “Lowell Offering.” The most famous contributor was perhaps Lucy Larcom, but many other women, including labor reformer Sarah G. Bagley, published in the “Offering.”

After Thomas left Lowell for Brooklyn, New York, the “three Harriets” (Harriet Farley, Harriet Lees, and Harriet Curtis) edited the “Offering.” The last issue of the “Lowell Offering” appeared in December, 1845, although a periodical called the “New England Offering” that was edited by Harriet Farley appeared in 1847 and continued until 1850.

The Second Universalist Church survived into the late 19th century, but the building was eventually sold and, much altered, was a theater and served various commercial purposes. It was demolished some years ago, the site is now a parking lot although the outline of church’s gable roof maybe seen on the brick wall of the adjacent building.

#8: Lowell Manufacturing Company

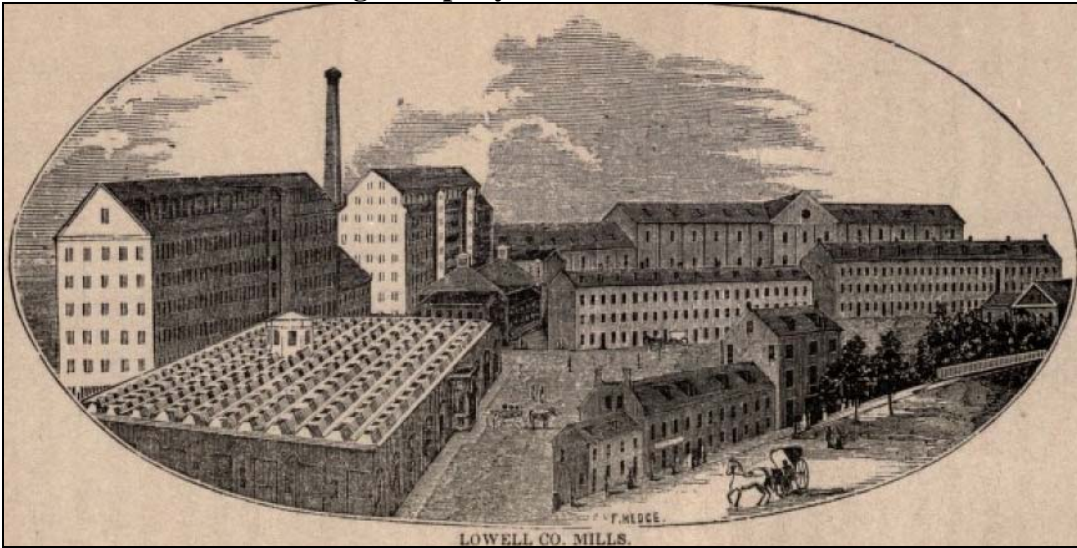


Image from Charles Cowley, *Illustrated History of Lowell* (1868)

Incorporated in 1828, The Lowell Manufacturing Company has roots in Medway, Massachusetts, where its superintendent, the Scottish-born Alexander Wright, was operating a woolen and carpet mill, in the mid-1820s, powered by water from the Charles River. In 1829, Wright moved to Lowell and brought with him most of his firm's highly skilled designers, mechanics, and managers, including overseer Royal Southwick (1795-1875). In its early years of operation the Lowell Manufacturing Company, also known as the carpet mill, produced woolens, carpets, and negro cloth, the latter article being sold largely in the South for clothing African slaves. By the early 1840s, when Erasmus B. Bigelow introduced the power-loom for weaving carpets—up to 1842 hand-loom weavers produced carpets at the Lowell mill—the company ceased the manufacture of negro cloth, although it was produced in other woolen mills along the Concord River in Lowell.

Wright served as agent of the carpet mill until his death in 1852, while Royal Southwick, who hailed from a Quaker family in Uxbridge, Massachusetts, became the mill's superintendent in the 1830s. Southwick became involved with the Lowell Anti-Slavery Society soon after its founding and was among the men and women who welcomed British abolitionist to Lowell when Thompson delivered a series of anti-slavery lectures in October and December of 1834. (It was during the December visit when a mob of anti-abolitionists, led a number of Lowell's leading citizens, attacked Thompson during his lecture in the Town Hall—see below for more on this event.)

Southwick's wife, Direxa (Claflin), was similarly involved in the anti-slavery movement and was a founder of the Lowell Female Anti-Slavery Society, which held bazaars and fairs to raise money for the abolitionist cause. While some anti-slavery-minded Whigs deserted the party in the early 1840s to join the Liberty Party, Southwick remained a Whig and continued to press for abolitionist measures. When Frederick Douglass and Charles Lennox Remond came to Lowell to speak at City Hall, Southwick invited them into his Tyler Street home. He chaired the city's Whig Committee and won election as Whig state senator from Lowell in 1843 and 1844. The latter year he resigned from the carpet mill and invested in a woolen mill in North Chelmsford. By this time Southwick had become a fairly wealthy man and owned property in Lowell, in addition to his financial interests in the textile industry. He moved to Boston in 1859 and resided there until his death in 1875.

Southwick's life in Lowell, namely his manufacturing and political activities, on the one hand, and his religious views and involvement in the abolitionist cause, on the other, raises some interesting questions: How did he feel about his involvement in an industrial concern that, for a number of years, benefited financially through the sale of one its products—negro cloth—to Southern slave plantations? Did his ardent support for Henry Clay and the ideology of Clay's American system (which promoted manufacturing, a national bank, government support of internal improvements, and protective tariffs) deter him from moving into the Liberty party, along with a number of his anti-slavery colleagues? The answer to these questions will likely never be known, but we do know that Southwick withdrew from political activity at about the time Clay was defeated in his final bid for the presidency in 1844. Southwick apparently never participated in the Free Soil party, heir to the Liberty party, although it is highly likely that he voted for Lincoln in 1860 and for the Republican ticket in subsequent elections.

The carpet mill where Southwick worked for many years underwent substantial alterations, including demolitions and additions, in the late 19th and early 20th century. Today it is almost unrecognizable from its 1840s appearance. For many years the mill complex has served as housing, art exhibit and gallery space, and as the National Park Service's Visitor Center.

#9: Huntington Hall (Boston & Lowell RR Depot)



Image from Lowell Historical Society

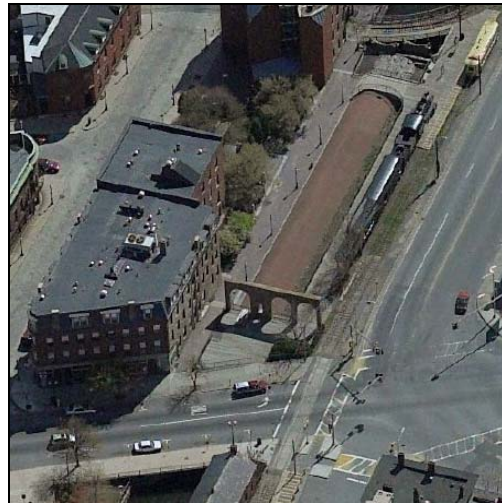


Image from Microsoft / Pictometry International Corp

In 1852-53, the City of Lowell and the Boston & Lowell Railroad Corporation jointly funded the construction of the Merrimack Depot, the design for which included the city's largest public hall, Huntington Hall, and a second large chamber called Jackson Hall, both located on the second floor of the building. Lowell builder Edward F. Watson erected the depot and the halls. Locomotives with passenger cars ran through the depot's archway, allowing passengers to board or disembark inside the depot.

Both halls proved to be exceptionally popular and Huntington Hall featured many notable men and women, including abolitionist Frederick Douglass, women's rights advocate Ann E. Dickinson, labor reformer Jennie Collins, Greenbacker firebrand Denis Kearney, Lowell native (and for several years a Radical Republican) General Benjamin F. Butler, and many others.

Of the many statewide political conventions held over the years, Huntington Hall was the site of numerous Democratic, Republican, and third party meetings and caucuses. Among the most heated prior to the Civil War were those involving the American party (1855-1857), also called the Know-Nothings, the Douglas Democrats (1860), and the Freemont Republicans (1856). Given the city's large Irish-Catholic population in the 1850s, the Know-Nothings stirred up considerable controversy by attacking "Papist plots" allegedly seeding disunion between North and South, as well as promoting anti-immigrant legislation as means of combating vice, intemperance, and political corruption. Although perhaps most notoriously known for its nativist campaign, during its two years in power in Massachusetts, the American party succeeded in passing some of the Commonwealth's most progressive legislation, including the increased funding for public schools, abolishing imprisonment for debt, permitting married women to hold property separate from their husbands, and strengthening child labor laws. Seeking to build a national party, however, the Know-Nothings divided over the issue of slavery with some members advocating a strong anti-slavery platform, while others stressed compromise along the lines of the Kansas-Nebraska Act.

#10: Middlesex Mechanic Association – Mechanics Hall



Image from *CORHA*, v. 6 (1904)



Image from Microsoft / Pictometry International Corp

Founded in 1825, the Middlesex Mechanics Association constructed Mechanics Hall in the mid 1830s. For many decades it served as a library, reading room, and lecture hall. Although membership in the association was limited to mechanics and manufacturers until 1851, a wide range of educational, cultural, and social events were held in the hall, especially beginning in the 1850s when men from various occupations were permitted to join. This included, for example, a performance by the Hutchinson Family, a New England musical and singing group that frequently played at abolitionist events. In April, 1861, soon after the bombing of Fort Sumter, members of the African-American Lew family, hailing from nearby Dracut and including a multi-generational group of musicians, performed in the hall as part of a recruiting drive for volunteer soldiers.

Like City Hall, Mechanics Hall had commercial shops on the first floor, one of which, during the years 1845 to 1850, housed the barber shop of escaped slave Nathaniel Booth, from Virginia. In the fall of 1850, when slave catchers appeared in Lowell to capture the 22-year-old Booth, he fled to Canada with the assistance of a number of Lowell residents. For many Lowellians, this incident dramatically heightened their awareness of the recently passed Fugitive Slave Law, bringing the issue of slavery directly into their lives.

Booth stayed for a time in Montreal before making his way back to Lowell. As noted above, Boott Cotton Mills agent Linus Child helped raise funds to pay Booth's master for his freedom. He had resumed working as a barber, though in the shop of a Mr. Barth, a few blocks away, next to the American House. By 1860 he was living in a predominately black Boston neighborhood with his wife Fanny and infant daughter Ida, and was continuing to work in the barbering trade.

Today Mechanics Hall looks nothing like it did when Nathaniel Booth operated his barber shop. The gable roof was removed as the building was increased in height and a yellow brick veneer covered over part of the second story windows and replaced much of the original red brick. The building has served for many years as the offices of Community Teamwork, Inc.

#11: Ladd and Whitney Monument



Image from Lowell Historical Society



Image courtesy of John Wren

Lowell's Monument Square includes the 1865 memorial for Luther C. Ladd and Addison O. Whitney, among the first casualties of the Civil War, and the "Statue of Victory," sculpted in 1866 to commemorate the American War of Independence and installed the following year. Over the years the Ladd and Whitney memorial has perhaps received the most attention. Both young men had moved to Lowell—Whitney from Waldo, Maine, and Ladd from Alexandria, New Hampshire—and worked, respectively in a textile mill and the Lowell Machine Shop. Shortly after the outbreak of the Civil War, both men volunteered, joining the Sixth Regiment on April 16, 1865.

At Huntington Hall, members of the regiment were addressed by a number of dignitaries and amid cheers they departed for Boston, from which they were to travel by train to Washington, DC. Arriving in Baltimore on April 19, the regiment had to disembark at the North Station and journey about two miles to the Washington Depot, via a horse railroad, where they would travel by another steam train to Washington, DC. Enroute to the Washington depot, a riotous crowd of Southern sympathizers blocked the horse railroad and then attacked the troops. Shots were fired on both sides with an unknown number of killed or wounded among the crowd and 14 wounded and four killed within the Sixth Regiment. News of this violence quickly spread throughout the

North and further hardened Northern resolve against Southern secessionists. In Lowell, 700 more men enlisted in early May.

Although the bodies of Ladd and Whitney were returned to Lowell and buried in Lowell cemetery, in 1865 their bodies were removed to monument square and a 27-1/2-foot-tall obelisk was erected to commemorate their sacrifice.

#12: Memorial Hall



Image from Lowell Historical Society



Image courtesy of Marianne Gries, Lowell, MA, photographer

In 1883 the Lowell city council received a petition signed by a number of the city's prominent residents requesting the construction of a substantial memorial to commemorate "the Lowell men who, in the war of 1861-1865, on land and sea, sacrificed their own lives that the nation might live." The petitioners recommended erecting a building rather than stone monument and suggested that such a building might be located on part of the property the city had purchased for a new municipal hall. A commission approved the idea and eventually the city raised funds to build Memorial Hall, which was to serve not only as shrine for the fallen Civil War soldiers, but also as a public library. The commission hired local architect Frederick W. Stickney (1854-1918) to design the building, which he carried out in Richardson Romanesque style in 1891. Construction soon began and after numerous delays, stemming in part from difficulty obtaining quality granite of consistent color, the building was completed in the fall of 1893.

In 1915, a fire destroyed much of the upper floor, including what is now the main reading room. The reconstruction of this large formal hall was undertaken and series of oil paintings, by the French artist Paul Philippoteaux (1846-1923), depicting scenes of the Battle of Fort Donelson, the Battle of Shiloh, and the Surrender at Appomattox, were purchased and installed. Although the date of these paintings is unknown, the artist Philippoteaux had established a national reputation for his massive cyclorama depicting the Battle of Gettysburg. Another work featured in Memorial Hall was a bust of General Benjamin F. Butler, presented by the "colored citizens of Boston," who esteemed the controversial political figure for his ardent advocacy of equal rights for all citizens. This sculpture of Butler now resides in the Hall of Flags of the Lowell Memorial Auditorium on East Merrimack Street.